

FINAL NOTES ON SALLE BEAYNO



Fig. 1
The 'Ballerina' in Salle Beayno.
(Photo by Hassan Ezz-Jawad)

هذا الجزء من مغارة جعينا رافق النادي اللبناني للتنقيب في المغارة بعدد كبير من الرحلات في العام المنصرم. ولكن العمل انتهى بعد ان تم اعادة اكتشاف ما يزيد عن 850 م من الممرات وهذا الرقم يضاف الى الطول الاجمالي للمغارة جعينا وبالتالي يكون النادي وضع مسود دقيق لهذا الجزء من المغارة. انقذت هذه الاشغال مغامرات واحداث مشوقة ينطبق اليها الكتاب في هذا المقال.

Après sa première visite, la salle Beayno a été réexplorée et retravaillée. Même si elle ne figurera plus dans nos prochaines sorties, elle laissera toujours dans notre mémoire tous les souvenirs d'une belle salle. Li-haut, en passant par le boulevard SCL de Jiita.



Fig. 2
The large tunnel in Salle Beayno.
(Photo by Hassan Ezz-Jawad)



Fig. 3
Mud stains on crystal white calcite a result of careless explorers.
(Photo by Hani Kamran)

Salle Beayno...

For the last year this name accompanied us in each and every Jiita trip, but now it's over (Fig. 1, 2 and 3).

The result: eight hundred and fifty-five meters of extra cave development to be added to the total development of Jiita cave with a fourth connection to the main Jiita axis; a new and more accurate survey is now finally completed (Fig. 4 and 5); and above all, lots and lots of adventures, stories and memories...

We're definitely going to miss the delightful climb up left after the SCL camp site, the opposition climb following that and finally the caving ladder, leading to a traverse line which leads in turn to a crawl, then a big chamber and a crawl and a... the point is that we spent memorable moments in gallery Beayno's tunnels and chambers.

Come to think of it, it was not long ago that we first decided to re-explore this section of our beloved mother of all caves, Jiita. The first trip to Salle Beayno took place in June of last year.

During that outing, a small group of SCL cavers pointed out the discrepancies between the published map and the actual structure of the cave (Labaki and Harb, 2008).

Salle Beayno had – again – its fair share of allotted time during the infamous three-day expedition trip in October 2007. The team spent a whole day exploring and surveying the galleries, except for the sinkholes which required dedicated equipment. These drops were later fully explored and drawn during a third trip.

Two question marks remained on the survey map. Now, is it just me or are they really provoking... those small question marks left behind, here and there on cave surveys?

So we packed our bits and pieces – in June 2008 and journeyed in once again. The remaining two sinkholes were finally explored; they turned out to lead into a common chamber and from that chamber a second sinkhole had to be rigged. The rigging was fast, the array of stalagmites, stalactites, columns and other formations made our rigging rather easy. The natural choice was to rig around these.

To rig 'naturally' whenever possible, as much as possible, saves the burden of using nuts and bolts on the delicate cave environment, an environment that already bore a lot of scars from previous expeditions. An environment, that in some places, used to be as white as snow, as beautiful as heaven, and now most of its beauty is covered by mud (Fig. 3). Ethics in speleology should be reminded, taught and stressed again and again.

That second sinkhole guided us to the top of the giant 'coulee' between the camp of SCL and the climb that leads to Salle Beayno. The view from up there was impressive, just like sitting on a balcony on top of a valley of wonders, with roaring water and twinkling stars; steep, intimidating edges framing the spectacle from the ceiling to the floor... then, back to caving reality... we were getting cold and had to leave.

One last passage was left unexplored though. It was one of those tight tunnels that only Rena K. can do, or so we decided... she loves them really!

She did enter and Hadi K. followed.

She found herself in a new, virgin tunnel but then she let go and suggested we leave it for future generations and we all agreed. We will certainly not tell them that it's filled with that sticky thick heavy mud. Good luck to them.

Leaving Salle Beayno that day, we knew, deep inside, that the work was over for now and we will probably never see this place again (Fig. 6 and 7). But at least the next time we pass by the SCL camp in Jiita, when someone points to a climb or an opening on top of a massive 'coulee'... we know what's up there... 🐦

